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Statement
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The President had asked me in February of 1985 to prepare a report to the American people on AIDS. It may seem to the user of this archive that it was an inordinate period of time to consume for such a task in presenting the report in October the following year.

This is the report that I asked the President's Cabinet to protect in privacy between the time I gave it to them the previous afternoon and the time I address the press on the morning of October 22, 1986.

I will not attempt to summarize this as I prepare the introduction almost 18 years later. I do suggest that the user read it carefully to absorb what I thought my assignment was from President Reagan, what efforts I made to do it properly, and what I thought could be accomplished by it.

Here and there, peppered throughout the reported are short statements by the Surgeon General that hit political issues of the day.

There was a long and detailed question and answer period which followed and it is worth repeating here all of what's been said elsewhere in this archive, that my answer to the question of how early sex education should be begun, set a good portion of the country against me in my fight against AIDS, because I was accused of leading the children of American down the garden path to immorality. Quite to the contrary, it was my oft stated belief that you cannot teach a child how to avoid a sexually transmitted disease unless you also inform that child something about his or her own sexuality. I stood by that statement then and I stand by it now.

This was a turning point, as several of the things I did in Washington were, in reference to my support by and disagreements with certain constituencies. The public health community far and wide was with me and my report was largely copied by the governments of France and Australia for circulation to their citizens. I lost some ultraconservative old guard Republicans, because they thought I was coddling homosexuals. I lost fearful parents who didn't have the courage to teach their own children what they should know about sex education and instead condemned me for trying to help. It was from this group, I presume, that the threats on my life arose from time to time.

Unbalance I gained more than I lost. Congressmen and Senators who had taken no notice of me or had actually decried the things I did, made emotional pro-Koop, pro-public servant addresses both house of Congress. One Senator wept in public at my compassion for homosexuals. I may have lost a lot of the Conservatives, but I gained many more Liberals and a huge previously uncommitted group of Moderates.

I learned once again, on this occasion, that almost any health warning issue by the Surgeon General divides the populous into those who agree with him and those who do not. There are always zealots on each side; and they always make themselves heard.